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[For additional information on folktales, see Category 539.]

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[For additional information on Sea Island texts, see Category 539.]

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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

• 538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 567 829 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut [115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [69]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 776 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

•538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. •538 After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras 322 Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] 764 We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

•538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

262 Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly. The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

[538] 225 567 [262]

000 This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

262 223 224 The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds. Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

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2

The Folk Literature

589 Some folk de gift fe lie.

Some folks are gifted liars (storytellers).

Oral Presentation

• 538 During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century folklorists like Joel Chandler Harris, Charles C. Jones, Elsie C. Parsons, and Ambrose Gonzales were quite thorough in their collections of tales, myths, legends, and other forms of verbal art in the Gullah-speaking areas of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] Until very recently, little contemporary work had been undertaken on the Sea Islands in folklore and literature. Today studies in oral traditions have grown beyond the tales and the various ways in which their plots can be varied, improved, or altered for the worse to encompass communicative forces peripheral to the tales themselves.[2] The study of oral literature involves more than just the collection and classification of tales. It is expanding to include such things as proxemics and various pragmatic forces inclusive of atmosphere and audience participation which combine to help create a good tale.

As Western cultures are gifted with a long tradition of written literature, the Gullah performers are likewise gifted with techniques and methods of communicative interactions characteristic of a long tradition of African and African-American oral literature. Unlike the writer, who is often left to create his characters in isolation and solitude, and who is at liberty to take a few days, a week, a month, and in many cases years to fill up a page with words carefully selected to create a certain mood and elicit a certain response, the oral performer must be

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538 prepared to create and perform his entire tale within a reasonably short period of time.[3] He does not and cannot perform effectively in isolation. He is influenced immediately by the occasion of the tale, and the atmosphere in which and the audience for whom he is performing. His tale is designed not to be read but to be performed and heard. In written transcriptions of oral literature the words are captured on the page, while the real flavor of the tales and the real artistry of the teller—the actual narration, the actual "telling of the tale" by a gifted and skillful performer—are lost.

Because the many communicative techniques used in storytelling, both verbal and nonverbal, are outside the realm of written literature, until fairly recently they were not felt to be important in written interpretations of Sea Island or other oral traditions. Collections by Parsons and others are indeed excellent in the depiction of characteristic 538 201 features of plot, but they are devoid of the many kinesic communicative techniques that a teller uses to engage his listeners' attention and actually mesmerize them with gestures—hand movements, a turning of the head, a long pause, a shifting of the eyes, a long knowing stare. Yet kinesics are a part of the oral performance, and much that is communicated through gesture has not been accounted for in written transcriptions of Sea Island oral literature. Even obvious verbal techniques like mimicry, repetition, ideophones (words which convey images and meaning through their sound), and rhetorical questions often fail to be taken into consideration, an omission that subtracts substantially from the beauty of the tales even as it obscures cultural methods of communication and expression.[4]

121 While it is too much to expect one discipline to teach us to be linguists, ethnologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, the common element among these and other disciplines is the commitment to interpreting and understanding the human interaction in language and culture. The need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior is becoming increasingly more apparent. David DeCamp, for example, drew attention to this need for exchange of information and ideas between linguists and scholars in related fields as a result of his efforts to scale sequential language data to form what he calls a linguistic continuum. Though he was the first to apply the technique to linguistic data, DeCamp found that as a general procedure it has been known to psychologists and sociologists as the Guttman Scalogram Analysis for over twenty years.[5]

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1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without meaning in the context in which it appears.
2. Like other aspects of human behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned and thus, subject to systematic analysis.
3. While recognizing the possible limitations imposed by particular biological substrata, until otherwise demonstrated, the systematic body motion of the members of a community is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs.
4. Visible body activity like audible acoustic activity systematically influences the behavior of other members of any particular group.
5. Until otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an investigable communicational function.
6. The meanings derived therefrom are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is investigated.
7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesic system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part.[8]

Some familiarity with body movements is important to the discussion of Sea Island literature because the performances of the individual are related to the function of the community of which he is a member, and have meaning in that context. Body expressions otherwise unique to certain African ancestral patterns may remain in the Sea Island communities, just as there are parallels in the language itself and in styles of dance and worship.

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Included in this discussion are examples of individual performing styles which are variations on a larger system of community-expected and -accepted behavior patterns during a storytelling event. According to Richard Dorson, there is a "group repertoire." There are indeed patterns of movements characteristic of *inland* black storytellers which are directly related to the culture as a whole. It was once assumed that most people in a subculture told the same tales in the same way. There is a very definite repertoire of gestures common to southern black sto-

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121 rytellers; every storyteller has command of these particular gestures
201 and every southern black storyteller has these features in common with
538 other members of the group. On closer observation of individual performers, however, we see that there is much variation and individuality of style. Once the group repertoire has been established, we can more clearly see the distinctions among performers.[9]

538 Beyond the area of kinesics, other nonverbal communicative interactions include such intrinsic components as the setting and atmosphere for storytelling and the degree to which audience participation influences and is actually a part of a Sea Island tale. Lacking these essential elements, most written versions of Sea Island, Caribbean, and some West African literatures appear as short, loosely strung-together episodic tales. The tales alone are barren and incomplete. They do not show the frequent words and phrases interjected by the listeners, nor do they indicate the subtle manner in which the speaker calls on them actually to help him along in telling his tale. Phillip Noss elaborates on this point: "When one reads tales that are meant to be presented orally, usually in a language other than the original, with little awareness of the cultural setting or the aesthetic principles and assumptions underlying the tale, it is not surprising if he concludes that the tales are merely action-packed episodes involving stock characters whose only dimension may be comic."[10]

The Western reader has been conditioned to judge language and literature through preconceived notions of the content of what an author writes, the organization and degree of development, and the style of the writing. The words are not heard, but a good writer's fervent hope is that the impact of the words will be felt, and consequently much of the writer's effort must be devoted to this task. In oral literature the performance, inclusive of audience participation, is as important as and in most cases more important than the actual content of the tale. For not only are the words heard, visualized, and felt, the whole narrative is actually experienced as one experiences a play. The characters that the performer creates are only as vivid and lifelike as the teller is able to make them. And how vivid they are made is often dependent on how enthusiastic the audience is. An excellent performer, when he
538 slaps his hands together and says "Bam! That one stuck!" can make
201 the audience experience the impact of the blow that Ber Rabbit delivers to the tar baby. As the speaker gradually raises his hand higher and higher in the air to indicate the height to which the buzzard takes the

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538 (201) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

The Setting

538 179 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (179) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

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538 517 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa), [264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a [273] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo, [171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than [196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 462 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island storytelling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
[562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

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592 593 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his 538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 177 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 857 171 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 517 461 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories. But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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596 to their families and neighbors and appear to enjoy companionship and group cooperation more than solitude and isolation. This social sharing
• 538 and seeming congeniality is as vivid in their literature as it is in their daily lives. An overt expression of group participation is witnessed in the interplay between speaker and audience in folktales, speeches, and sermons. In Sea Island public speaking, the audience is as important for a good performance as the performer himself. As in Africa, the best audience is a lively audience: one in which the listeners participate actively in the narration by responding to certain cues from the performer. In really exciting performances speaker and audience become so intermeshed and such oneness is achieved that it may appear that the response is an actual part of the tale itself. This is particularly true, of course, for tales well known to both audience and performer.

538 Unless tales are told in the privacy of a home with very few lis-
171 teners, the speaker will rarely begin a performance without some "warming up." Among the Igbo and Ibebio, for example, formal folktales are preceded by songs and selected tales called (in Igbo) *akuko eji awake nti*, which means the first tale told to awaken or to enlighten the ear so that it absorbs the real meaning of what follows. Among the Igbo, before any tale begins, the speaker greets his listeners by saying "Chakpii [Are you ready?]." And the listeners respond, "Haa [We are ready to welcome your story!]." (These words are repeated at the end of each story, where they may be read as, respectively, "My story has ended" and "Thank you, storyteller, for your tale.") While the islanders do not seem to have any tale prescribed for the sole purpose of opening telling sessions, they do have some patterns for preparing to tell informal folktales.

538 The timing and atmosphere are very important to telling, hearing, and collecting good tales. If the audience is not properly prepared, the occasion is not conducive to good tales. The atmosphere must be relaxed; the teller not only must be willing to tell a tale but must have an audience and sufficient time to tell the story. The more listeners, the better the tales seem to be. In large groups, even when a storytelling event has been planned, it often takes quite a while for a session to begin. The pattern seems to be that everyone in the group will at first pretend not to know any stories, or even how to tell one. If it is known that one of the people in the group is a good performer, then someone may point him out and ask him to tell a tale. He of course refuses.

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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly congenial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

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538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

[171] Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this person, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone 538 and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting 209 next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West [171] African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact, two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid storytellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell [201] tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a 209 visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island communities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

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209 other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

538 171 The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expectations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions, perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

538 57 171 The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

538 For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

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• 538 audience participation and response in such communities helps in the understanding of their language and literature in its social context.

(121) It is to be hoped that more objective methods of describing communicative behavior in oral traditions will be included in future written versions of oral literature.

The Storytellers

The performance of an individual within a culture is directly related to the expectations of the culture, and the individual performer usually respects these expectations. The Sea Island storytellers follow techniques for telling stories that have been passed on as tradition. The best storytellers are those who know how to evoke lifelike images in a listener's mind and create suspense and drama through the interactions of characters. How these goals are achieved is determined by the individual storyteller. The most common devices used to create intensity and excitement include repetition of words and phrases at strategic points in a story; mimicry, which may involve anything from the shrieking sounds of a hog or the loping motions of a running wolf to the twittering sound of a partridge as he inadvertently moves through an oat field; voice modulation, ranging from a very high-pitched, shrill tone indicative of nervousness, agitation, and excitement to a very low-pitched, quiet tone suggesting cautiousness and reserve; and various bodily gestures, such as placing the left hand in the right armpit and pumping the right arm up and down against the body to produce the sound of a large animal galloping in the distance.

Oral style, like written style, is idiosyncratic. The individual speaker will embroider his own style on certain features and thus add uniqueness to his performance. The tellers vary. Some are very fluent and the words flow with ease. Some hesitate and search for words and often resort to *ah, wime,* or other fillers to try to unify what they are saying. Some tellers are better at certain kinds of narratives than others. I found that Mr. Henry would not tell any tales about Ber Rabbit and his uncanny ways, but he could talk for hours about historical events such as the Garvey movement or the 1893 storm. His style, like his topics, was always elevated and serious. On the other hand, Mr. Oree would tell only humorous tales, and his preference for trivial

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•538 topics was reflected in his playful, jesting performances. Personality, however, is not necessarily woven into an individual's personal delivery style, because extremely reserved and nontalkative people may tell tales which are lengthy, raucous, and sometimes even bawdy. The ways in which various narratives can be treated and presented are best illustrated by discussing some individual storytellers, their personal histories, the types of stories they tell, and their method of presentation. From this information the reader may more fully appreciate the range of styles falling within the Sea Island tradition.

159 538 *Mr. Ted Williams,* in his late forties, is a family man and one of few blacks to own a substantial amount of land on Wadmalaw Island. Along with farming that land, he owns and runs a local grocery store. As a young man he left the island to try city work, "but I didn't stay. I always think about home. I always want to come back home. And I always wanted to work for myself."[12] Mr. Ted is an influential deacon in his church, and in this capacity he participates widely in fund-raising drives and other community activities. He is a very sociable person; he likes being around people and is a welcome visitor to any home. As a deacon he is a weekly speaker before the church congregation and knows well how to inspire and excite people. His seemingly natural public speaking skills are easily carried over to his skill and ability in telling a good tale. Mr. Ted has no preference for types of folk narratives; his repertoire ranges from the humorous exploits of a scheming buzzard to serious oratory on the design of the universe. He is known best not for a particular subject but simply for his ability to tell a story, a "good lie." I found his personal style probably the most effective of all in eliciting audience participation. Once he began a tale, he was an enthusiastic teller. He amused his listeners by walking around, joking, laughing, and inspiring everyone to become involved with his story. Because he seemed to enjoy performing, any tale he told was welcomed by his listeners. He was playful and constantly teased the audience by saying that this was his last tale, and he would not tell another one. Likewise, he was a catalyst to other tellers, who often tried to imitate his style and vied with him in trying to tell the best tale. Few matched his technique, though some told more intricate stories.

Mr. Ted usually stood when he began a tale and seldom sat down until it was finished. When he did sit, it was only for a moment, and even then some part of his body was in constant motion. His hands

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted William, is known for his ability to tell a good story.

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159 were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back
• 538 and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page
[201] these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale.

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was con-
[193] temporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community.

Mr. James Oree is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

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ative person, once he decides that he wants to "waste" his time with you. During the period that I spent on the Sea Islands, he was always helpful but agreed to tell stories to me only at the request of the lady next door, whose encouraging words were, "You know some old-time story, so tell she some!" And some very excellent ones he told! He was quite the comedian, and all of his tales were humorous and lively (see "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter"). Even when he attempted a serious tale, it seemed to come out funny.

Like Mr. Ted, however, he had a unique personal delivery which captivated his audience and caused them to respond well to his style of expression. For example, he always took his time to tell a story, and the leisure and sheer idleness with which he spoke were part of his uniqueness as a good storyteller. As is characteristic of most Sea Island tales, his stories were series of action-packed episodes. Yet he never stood up, walked around, or moved unless he felt compelled to do so to emphasize some point. In fact, during most of his telling time, he sat with his eyes half closed, as if contemplating the character's next move. At times he seemed to be unaware of an audience; he seemed instead to be carrying on a dialogue as though he were one of the characters himself. For example, instead of introducing direct speech with the formulaic verb *say*, Mr. Oree often pretended to be the characters and simply spoke their dialogue. His ability to modulate his very deep bass voice to take on the character and speaking habits of various participants in a story seemed to be one of his most artistic techniques, adding life, zest, and interest to his tales. But even more effective was the deliberate casualness of his style, which kept the listeners hanging on every word.

There was very little actual description in Mr. Oree's tales—he used very few words, in fact, and thus even fewer long sentences. Yet the listeners were seemingly able to intuit the details of his story from the description that he did give and the slow, contemplative manner in which he told the tale. He used more ideophones than many of the other tellers, and he was also extremely adept at producing certain sounds. For example, this is the way Mr. Oree represented the caution in Ber Rabbit's steps as he tries to manuever past a hunter with a gun in an open oat field:

> Rabbit jump. . . . [He closed his eyes and contemplated, swaying back and forth as if counting to himself.] Rabbit jump. . . .

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> [Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy,* you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

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538 The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

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Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

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159 style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of
539 many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

159 During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his
• 538 delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point
[201] with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

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159 ingly in order to permit the listeners to reflect on the content of his
• 538 narrative; whatever his reason, it was a highly effective technique. During his long pauses, older members often offered a word of encouragement, such as "Tell em, Henry." Mr. Henry would reply, "Shore [sure]! I remember that good as yesterday!"

Like most good Sea Island narrators, Mr. Henry used a highly emotional oratorical method that tended to stimulate and excite his listeners. He frequently used repetition and parallel constructions, with mesmerizing effects. For example, he often spoke of the days of his youth, a time when he lived and worked on a plantation. The simple words "We ben living over there . . . on the white people place . . . the white people place" alone on the page can never capture the emotion of his phrasing or show his grave expression as he paused to reflect. The words had apparently brought to mind untold memories, so many that he felt compelled to repeat the phrase again softly and more deliberately, as if each word had history in itself.

In addition to his various uses of repetition, Mr. Henry would often actually shout out with passionate anger, joy, or excitement. To his exclamations, older members would respond with equal fervor. He would call out the name of a responding member and ask, for example:

> "Myma, you ain't know what I bina talk about, do you?"

The respondent (Myma in this case) would reply:

> "Yeah man! Shore I bina know!"
> "Huh?"
> "Yeah! Yeah!"
> "But this one here [pointing to a younger member] ain't de know. E [he] ain't even ben born yet."

Appropriately to his topics, Mr. Henry's language had formal over-
[193] tones even in casual utterances. Thus he retained the elements characteristic of a creolized Gullah speech: one pronoun for both masculine and feminine subjects, a range of preverbal markers, few if any morphological inflections, the introductory or formulaic verb *say*, and other features of the creole tradition (see Chapter 4).

159 *Miss Deeley* would not reveal her age, nor would she consent to being recorded or permit me to use her last name, but she is one of the most prolific women storytellers that I encountered. She is fifty or

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She is fifty or more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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some tobacco juice on the ground and told them that they had better be back home before the juice dried. She seemed to delight in playing with the children, however. One evening she told a series of tales about "raw head and bloody bone" and then retired to her room, leaving the children and me sitting, gazing into the fire. Shortly afterward she appeared in the open doorway, down on all fours with a sheet covering her body, her arm and hand outstretched as if she were reaching for one of the children. Everyone, including me, jumped up and ran to the back door calling her name. She then unveiled herself, overjoyed that she had frightened the children but delirious with laughter that she had actually frightened me.

Miss Deeley's telling style differed from most of the men's in that she usually kept her voice low and rather sedate, as did most of the other women who told stories. She did not tell many tales in the animal tradition of trickster. As noted, her favorite topics were "hants," hags, and unusual murders (see "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones"). Her subject matter may have been inspired by the proximity of a graveyard to her home; her belief that she had seen spirits of people buried there perhaps added realism to her tales both in her mind and in her listeners' minds. She was not a master of facial gestures as Mr. Ted was, but rather captivated her listeners through vocal expressions and voice modulation. Characteristic of her speaking style were low mournful moans, of varying durations and intensities, and subtle exclamations at strategic intervals. The low intensity and monotony of her voice contributed significantly to her ability to create suspense through an aura of intense dread and to communicate fear and even terror to her listeners.

The nature of her topics made Miss Deeley's audience a somewhat captive group, and she knew well how to keep them that way. She had a mastery of narrative devices used to test her audience to see if they were indeed abreast of her tale. For example, during a very intense part of a tale, she would often stop, spit tobacco into the fire, and ask one of the children if she had remembered to bring the clothes in off the line, knowing full well that the chore had been done. The child would quickly answer yes and beg her to go on and tell what happened. Satisfied that she held her listeners' total attention, she continued with her narrative. Given the nature of her topics, her audience communicated with her on a nonverbal level; rarely would anyone dare to make a sound. She seemed to enjoy the spellbinding effect of her narratives

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[NN1] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[NN4] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and be-
[NN6] come as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to par-
•538 ticipate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Further-
159 more, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
797 finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

159 *Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years, and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

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159 present wife. He admits to directing appreciating glances at a fine-looking woman even today, but says that a look is the extent of his appreciation.

Mr. Mickell attended elementary school on Johns Island, but because he had to work to help support his family, he was forced to quit school during the elementary grades. Yet he has done well for himself. He was in the navy and has worked on various jobs from handyman to longshoreman. He now lives a rather tranquil but satisfying life, with a degree of comfort slightly more sumptuous than that of many islanders.

159 Mr. Mickell is a gifted storyteller. Many of the tales I heard him tell have direct parallels with some told in Nigeria (see "Ber Rabbit
• 538 and the Lord"). His speaking style is as characteristic of Sea Island speech as the other informants'. He speaks very rapidly with a very high pitch and tone. In fact, I sometimes found it extremely difficult to understand him when he became engrossed in a narrative. The problem with interpretation was not with his vocabulary, though he knew many old words with African origins; the problem was primarily a phonological one. The rhythm, tempo, and stress with which he pronounced the English words is really one of the most outstanding characteristics of contemporary Gullah speech. Though I had difficulty adjusting to his delivery, the audience composed of speakers born and raised on the Sea Islands had no problem at all, as would be expected.

I found Mr. Mickell's most distinguishing feature to be his use of gestures and repetition. A rapid rate of speaking, sustained high pitch, and strong rhythm are characteristic of the community. Mr. Mickell, however, spoke more quickly than others. The rapid speaking style was enough in itself to create excitement, but the method by which Mr. Mickell used repetition, whether in words or phrases or in parallel structure, helped to intensify the excitement in his rapid series of action-packed episodes. In one tale, for example, he described how a king snake is able to kill other snakes. He conveyed the striking manner in which the king snake coils itself around its victim through a series of words repeated rapidly in succession, "Wrap up, wrap up,
159 wrap up." To illustrate this action, he made his hands into fists and rolled them rapidly over and over in front of him, completing the coil-
201 ing gesture with a "pssssup" to indicate that the victim is completely
538 immobile within the coils. To show how the king snake stretches its victim and shatters its spinal cord in one quick motion, Mr. Mickell

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159 20 538 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying, "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 524 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 123 342 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

[365] [514] 159 123

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

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159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few
226 "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
226 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving
133 because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
538

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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told
• 538 the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the
event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a
group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than
at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly
hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it
and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable
and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little
538 nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about
the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not
having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleep-
ing times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never under-
stand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But
then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways,
dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There
were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went
to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I
123 sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted
that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would
stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss
Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-
degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred
the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking
her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538] she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young
children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in
those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written
159 literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit
123 the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter,
who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I
757 had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw
Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

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159 was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down
[123] the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her
159 father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head
of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice.
596 Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for
[538] spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at playing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115 *Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy* (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [787] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 787 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 959 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

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115 759 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures, for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return [782] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sun- •538 days as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 761 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

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Conclusion

538 Folktales, like languages, are not immutable. They are constantly changing: the plots vary, the characters change, new names are substituted for old ones, and the language of the tales generally takes on the flavor and style characteristic of the era; any given speaker may rearrange, improvise, or improve a plot, episode, or character to his own specifications. On the Sea Islands the teller may add such things as telephones, highways, automobiles, and even televisions in contemporary tales, yet these innovations are set within the framework of traditional themes. In the minds of some island youngsters, for example, Ber Rabbit may now live in a house instead of his traditional hollow in the briar patch. But plots remain essentially the same: Ber Rabbit still tricks Ber Wolf, but instead of returning to his den in the hollow, he returns to his house in or near a briar patch.

538 177

While the speakers may vary in their individual styles of delivery, there remain very distinct features characteristic of Sea Island folk telling:

538

The teller

1. will usually tease his audience when he has them thoroughly involved in his tale by pretending to forget or pretending that he will finish his tale at a later time;
2. will usually ask rhetorical questions of given members, and will expect one member or all members of his audience to respond;
3. will usually try to make his delivery as dynamic and emotional as possible through modulations in the pitch or tone of voice;
4. will usually speak louder and more rapidly when he begins to close his narration;
5. will usually make his closing as dramatic as possible;
6. will usually give a tale a moral if one is not already inherent;
7. will usually use a range of kinesic movements or gestures to help describe the events of a tale.

The audience

1. will usually respond or reply to questions or cues given by a speaker;

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• 538

2. will usually respond overtly to a good storyteller by injecting words of praise or understanding such as "Yeah," "That's right," or "I know what you mean" during the entire course of a tale;
3. will usually expect the performer to end with a dynamic closing and express their appreciation of his tale by saying, "That's all right" or "You sure enough know how for tell good tale";
4. will usually harmonize the rate, rhythm, pitch, and loudness of their responses to accord with those of the performer;
5. will usually communicate with people nearby either nonverbally, through head nods, handshakes, approving or disapproving glances, or other communicative techniques, or verbally, through words and phrases like "You hear what he de say," "Yeah, man!" and others.

[201]

The storyteller is only one of the ingredients necessary for seeing and hearing a good tale. The tradition dictates that the storyteller cannot perform alone. Not only must he be in a place conducive to telling a good tale, but he must have an interested and responsive audience in order to do his best performing. When all these ingredients are mixed in proportion, the performances of both the teller and the listeners are commensurate with traditional Sea Island social practices. The dependence of one on the other remains as apparent in everyday interactions on the Sea Islands as it does in the African cultures of the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibebio, and others from which the Sea Islanders are descended and from whose folktales their stories are said to have been derived.

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A Sermon

793
•538

For true, the Lord ben give em silver trumpet,
and he shonuf know how for blow em!

The Reverend Renty Pinckney is minister of New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. His sermon is not presented in its entirety here, because it is very long. The Reverend Mr. Pinckney, like most island ministers, has memorized the Bible thoroughly; his creativity is revealed by his ability to join scattered allusions into a cohesive whole.[23]

53
796

The Bread of Life

Rev. Renty Pinckney
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God is the Bread of Life
God will feed you when you get hungry *Oh yes! I know he will.*
All right! Yeah. Amen! Yes sir!

Look on the mountain
Beside the hill of Galilee *My Lord!*

Watch his disciple
Riding on the sea *Yeah! Uh huh!*

Tossing by the wind and rain *Yeah. Come up*

Going over the sea of temptation *Uh hum*

Brother, I don't know
But I begin to think
In this Christian life *Yes!*

Sometime you gone be toss *Yes, yeah!*

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53 Where all wicked *Wicked*
796 Shall cease *Cease, cease! Yes Lord!*
All weary soul *All weary soul!*
Shall be at rest *Rest!*
Jesus said
I am the Bread *I am the Bread. The Bread. I am the Bread*
Of Life
Let us Pray *All right! Yes sir! Yes Lord! Let us pray!*
. . . . . .

• 538 Gullah Tales Exemplifying Audience Participation

(524) RIDDLER: Round like a top. Deep like a cup.
Mississippi river ain't full em up!

RESPONDENT: A sifter (strainer)

The reply from the audience is as germane to the Sea Island tales as it is to the prayers and sermons. However, the relaxed social atmosphere in which tales are told permits more exchange between speaker and listener than does the more orthodox surroundings of the prayers and sermons. The storytellers are not set apart from the group by a sacred podium or some other feature used to separate participating service members from the rest of the group. The listeners are therefore free to inject words and phrases, utter clarifying remarks, make gestures, or even help the teller along with his tale if appropriate. These interactions are very subtle and in no way interfere with the performance of a good tale. Likewise, no good tale can be told without the responses of an active audience, and no good tale can be told without the traditional "warming" period to create the right atmosphere. Like the prayers and sermons, the tales are usually preceded—if there is an audience present to act as respondents—by songs, spiritual or otherwise, and then by games, riddles, jokes, and dozens. As previously mentioned, the friendly teasing relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the group

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538 so that it will participate in the event by responding to certain cues given by the teller.

The teller's call and the audience's reply are often simultaneous. Clearly they must be distinguished on the printed page, and separating them formally as is done here helps clarify the degree to which the speaker and the audience rely on back-and-forth interplay to develop and perpetuate a rhythmic flow once the tale begins.[24]

128 The following notational conventions have been used to provide more information concerning the context in which these tales were told. Double exclamation marks indicate loudness, and triple exclamation marks, extreme loudness. Parentheses enclose indications of nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as long pauses, laughter, eye or hand movements, or meditations. Dashes indicate interruptions or pauses in thought or speech. Ellipsis dots show omissions. A series of hyphens indicates phonological lengthening, as in O-o-o-kay! Italics are used for responses and for emphasis on words or phrases. Square brackets enclose translations or interpolations of words or letters.

538 [264] These tales were told around a fire site at a local store just after nightfall on Wadmalaw Island. Approximately twenty or thirty people gathered, eating crabs and roasting hot dogs while they waited for the storytelling session to begin. The order here does not necessarily reflect the order in which tales were told. Further, some tellers were better performers than others and thus were asked to tell several tales before the session ended.

"The Man and the Skita [Mosquito]" is an extension of the Clever Slave Motif J1114.01 (more commonly known in the United States as an "old marster and John" tale) and Motif H961, Task Performed by Cleverness. It falls vaguely within Tale Type 920 III, Impossible Task.[25] In this tale the philosophical outlook of Ber Rabbit prevails: even when faced with almost insurmountable odds, one can survive not through physical strength but through one's own wit and intelligence.

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539 skita was done! *Um hum. Yeah! Skita been done!* And that was that one!!! *(Clapping) Yeah! (laughter) Kill em! Yes sir!*

O-o-o-kay! Another good one! O-o-o-kay, the next one. Tell another one! *(Laughter and clapping)*

• 538 "Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch" is classified as Type 1310 A, Motif 581.2, Briar-Patch Punishment for Rabbit. This tale is often the sequel to "The Tar Baby" (Tale Type 175), a tale still told and retold on the Sea Islands by young and old. The fact that the audience already knew this tale well only added to the excitement of the occasion. The teller's creativity was displayed by the variations in his facial expressions and the energy and enthusiasm with which he chose to tell his tale. A well-known and favorite storyteller, this man never disappointed his audience. He spoke very rapidly and thus did not wait for a response to every word or phrase.

539 Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch

Mr. Ted Williams

Ah—Anybody else? Anybody else? *You go ahead and talk!* I go—I gone tell a—a few short story. *Uh humm. Tell em!* About the rabbit and the—and the man. *Um humm. Ber Rabbit! Ber Rabbit!*

The man catch the rabbit in his um—in peanuts patch.
Trap em in he peanuts patch.
And he say, "Now, Ber Rabbit, you always sharp!
You always go a lot of scheme!
But now, you know what I gone do with you?
I gone punish you.
I gone throw you in that fire!! *(Laughter from audience)*

Ber Rabbit, O Lord! (Pausing as if to think)
I tell you what he do.
"I tell you what you do—old man (as if thinking to himself).
Throw me in the fire!" (shrugs his shoulders) *Throw me in the fire!*

The man say, "No, you too free!" (shaking his head).

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539 Say, "I ain't gone do that!
I tell you what I gone do with you.
I gone throw you in that river!" *The river!*
Ber Rabbit say, "I tell you what you do.
Throw me in that river! *Yeah! The river!* Let me drown there!
Just throw me in the river—let me.
I want a dead anyhow.
Throw me in the river!" *Um huh!*
Man say, "No-o-o-. I ain't gone throw you in there cause you too free! You too sharp!"
And he say (pausing as if to think),
"I know! You know what I gone do with you, Ber Rabbit?" *Yeah!*
(Unconcerned) "What you gone do? What you gone do?"
He carry em to the man briarwood patch. And boy!!!
(shakes his head). That briar ben about that high
(raises his hand above his head).
Say, "Ber Rabbit, I gone throw you in that briarwood patch."
(Moaning) "OOO-o-o-o Lord!!! *(Much laughter)*
(Wrinkling his nose and crooking his hand and fingers)
Ple-e-e-ase do-o-o-n't throw me in there!!! *(Much laughter from the imitation)*
(Whining and shaking) Dem briarwood stick me up! *(Laughter)*
Ple-e-e-ase" (whimpering).
And he take Ber Rabbit, say, "Oh! I got you now, Ber Rabbit!"
"OOO-o-o-o, don't throw me in there! *Got em!*
I rather you kill me!" (holding hands as if praying).
So, e take the rabbit and thow em in briarwood patch.
The rabbit say, "You fool you! This where I born and raise!" *(Much laughter and clapping among the audience). Born and raise!*
That's all now! I ain't coming back in! *Born and raise! (Laughter)*

• 538 "The Buzzard and the Hawk" is only one of many, many tales told of Ber Buzzard and his unsavory eating habits; yet the buzzard is revered

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538 [825] on the Sea Islands for his patience and faith in the Lord's salvation. The buzzard is not an animal that the islanders are ambivalent about. He keeps his distance and they keep theirs; they never kill him for sport but actually depend on him to help them locate dead dogs and farm animals which may have strayed away and got lost in the marsh. Variants of "The Buzzard and the Hawk" are numerous and can be found in just about any collection of African-American tales.[26]

Before beginning this tale the speaker had told a series of well-received stories. He paused at the outset to tease the audience into asking for more.

539 The Buzzard and the Hawk

Mr. Ted Williams

Y'all know—(pauses and addresses the audience)—I ain't taking too much time? *No! Uh uh!!*

Huh? *No!*

Y'all know about the buzzard? *Uh uh*

(Looking at the audience as if puzzled) Y'all didn't hear about the buzzard? *No! (laughing)*

(Again, acting even more surprised) Y'all ain't heard about the buzzard?!!! *(The audience laughs at his expression) Tell us!! Tell us about the buzzard?*

The buzzard and the monkey! *(laughing and clapping) Tell us about the buzzard and the monkey! (more laughing and clapping)*

Louis Jerden, Louie Jerden tell y'all about that now, y'all! (Looks at the older members of the audience.) The old people know about Louie Jerden and the buzzard! *(Elderly members nod and smile knowingly)*

You know the buzzard always was a—a nice educated animal, you know! *(Nods) Um hum! um hum!*

E take e time—(reflecting) just like he done with the hawk. *(Nods and um hums in unison)*

Him and the hawk was sitting down on the limb one day, and he said—Him and the hawk had a consolation [consultation].

Say, "I'm very hungry!!!"

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539 The hawk say, "I'm hungry too! (rubbing his stomach). Lord—O Lord! My stomach! I too hungry!"
The buzzard say (patiently), "Wait on the Lord—"
And e look up—Nothing for dead—NOTHING, you know
So the buzzard say (exasperated), "MAN!!!"

The hawk say, "I can't wait no longer!"

So when he look (straightens his back as if seeing something interesting), a little sparrow come along. And—and—and the hawk get up and run at the sparrow and hit a tree *Uh huh!*

And the buzzard sit on he limb and look the hawk, look at the hawk, when he run into tree. The buzzard say (nodding his head knowingly and pointing his finger), "I tell you wait on the Lord. Now I gone eat you now!" *(Much laughter and jovial responding among the audience)*

• 538 Though the buzzard is revered for his patience and intelligence, he is not, according to the islanders, as "smaat" in any way as the monkey. "The Buzzard and the Monkey" is an example of the syncretism of folk culture and pop culture. Louis Jordan, a prominent rhythm and blues artist, recorded the popular tune "Straighten Up and Fly Right" in the 1940s, basing the song on the situation portrayed in this folktale. Here one sees a direct reborrowing of the pop recording back into the folk tradition. The teller depends on his listeners' familiarity with the tale and the song to elicit their support in singing the chorus from the record. In this manner he transforms the old tale into a cante fable, or "singing tale."[27]

539 The Buzzard and the Monkey

Mr. Ted Williams

—So the buzzard done the same ting with the monkey! The buzzard got so-o-o-o-o hungry one day, he couldn't hold it (holding his stomach). So he went to the monkey.
(Aside to one of the listeners) Him and the monk was good friend, you know. *(Listener nods) Um hum!*

He say (loudly), "Brother Monk!!!"

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Say, "Ah—Monkey?"

"Ah? I ain't doing nothing!"

Monkey say, "Well-let-start-for-straighten-up-and-fly-a-little-right-now.
Yougettingalittledamnhighupinair—hear!!" *(Much laughter and cheering from the listeners)*

(Laughs) So e gone little higher (points upward). E choke em and e say, Ah! The, the monkey tell the buzzard. E say (confused), the buzzard tell the monkey, "Say, Monkey? Release your holt and I set you for free!!" *Yeah, release em!*

And the monkey say, "Well, got dang, let me tell you one ting now!! You tell me, say, you gone show me the view and do this and do that! Now you WAY UP HERE! I want you de straighten up and fly right!"

Tell em, say, buzzard tell, say,
"Well—well—ah! Release your holt and I'll set you free!!! *(Cheers from the audience)*

So (laughs) Louie Jerdon write that record, you know!! Right now, we can sing that! *Yeah! Yeah!*
(Stands and walks aroung the crowd) Straighten up and fly right!
(Asks members of the audience) Who understand what I'm say now? *(The audience joins in singing)*
Straighten up and fly right!
Straighten up and fly right!
Do long, papa, don't you blow your trump!

(Laughs) Ha! Ha! Aint that what e say?!!! *Yeah! (Much laughter and cheering)*

538 "Peter and the Rock" is classified as Type 774, Jest about Christ and Peter. It is only one of a series of tales told on the islands about how Peter is made to look ridiculous because of his greed or some other sinful trait.

This speaker adjusted his narrative style to a rather formalized language to tell a somewhat religious tale. As his tale progressed, his language became increasingly creolized and his audience showed a greater involvement with the content of the tale. Near the end, the speaker seemed more concerned with delighting the audience than with

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538 his language: his manner became more relaxed; he put more of himself into the tale; and the audience responded with tremendous enthusiasm. At the end his language reverted to the rather formal style ("That's it, now!").

Peter and the Rock

Mr. Ted Williams

I going in the Bible now. *Okay. Okay. All right now.*
Now—he—you, everybody know the, the Scripture? *Yeah, Yeah!*
Ah—Peter—James, John, and—Christ all, all of em? *Yeah*
And, well, you know, Christ—always on a good mission. He always was doing good thing for people, you know, in his, eh, demonstration. *In demonstration. Yeah!*

So—ah—come a time when—when—when Christ want a—go to—from Jericho to Jerusalem. *Uh huh*
And he come out de his twelve disciple and ask them.
Say—"Now I want you, two disciple de go with me.
I want two *good* disciple for go with me." *Yeah, two good disciple for go!*

So you know Christ always want John de go with em. *Uh hum, want John de go*
Then Peter come—you know Peter was always was *slick*. Peter say, "Well, I go with you too." *Yeah! (laughing) go with you too.*

So when they go on the road de going de, ah, Jerusalem from Jericho, then Christ say, "Ahm, *everybody* pick up a rock! We want de demostrate the cross.
We want de tote a rock from here—from Jerusalem to Jericho—from Jericho de Jerusalem." *Jericho de Jerusalem*

So, Christ got a rock—
John got a BIG rock—
and then Peter got a li-i-i-sma-a-a-ll rock about the size of this

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•538 instrument here (holding up the microphone). *Um hum (whispers)*
That de Peter all right now. *(Quiet laughter)*

So (laughs), when he got al-l-l-most de Jerusalem, Christ say, "Everybody lay he rock down, and let e rest off a little bit a for e get in the city."

So Peter say, "Well, thank God!
Y'all tote that big rock, but I got this little one here.
I ain't tired!" *(Laughter from the audience)*
And de set the rock down—and rest and sleep.

So, when they wake up—then Christ say,
"Okay! I know y'all disciple hungry now."
Say, "I gone turn this rock in de bread." *Bread!*
So dey turn in John rock de bread. *Turn em de bread!*
John had a BIG rock—turn em de bread. *Um humm.*
So John had a BIG piece of rock, bread.
They turn e rock in de bread.
He had a big rock. *Big bread!*

Uh huh.
So Peter ben so chafe [vexed],
Peter turn e—he turn he Peter rock de bread, but Peter just had a li-i-i-piece of rock. *(Much laughter)*
Was a little read—(laughing) bread.
So—ah—and so when de ready, *(laughter)*
When they de finish
Done—eat—and start for walk off—

"So, okay! Let me—everybody get a rock now. See the city right over there. Everybody get another rock."

So John get a small rock this time. *Um hum, a small one!*
Christ get a small one.
Peter get a BIG old rock. *Big one this time! (Much laughter)*

And they get in Jerusalem, Christ say, "Everybody put e rock down."
And Christ walk up and look at the big beautiful city.

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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

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I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

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guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pronouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ǫ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [də], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have parallels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

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Regardless of the region, these animals are heroic figures in the same tradition as Ber Rabbit in Gullah and inland black literature, or Ananse the spider in Caribbean literature.

In attempting to explain why a weak creature like a rabbit was selected as a folktale hero in black America, traditional theories have posited the powerless being as the personification of the slave, who had to be extraordinarily clever to avoid and survive the wrath of the slave master. While this concept is theoretically sound and indeed operative, it loses validity in light of the evidence that physically insignificant creatures were revered for their intelligence in Africa long before the African-American was ever subjected to the cruelties of slavery. Seldom does one find massive or ferocious animals like the lion, the leopard, the elephant, or the hippopotamus depicted in African literature as shrewd and insightful. They are continuously portrayed as stupid and as perpetually duped and humiliated by smaller animals who must from necessity live by their wits, not by their strength. This concept of shrewdness and cunning embodied within a tiny animal is apparent, for example, in "The Spider, the Elephant and the Hippopotamus," a tale told to Finnegan by the Limba and also told to Cronise and Ward by the Temne speakers.[32] In this tale the spider uses his wit against the power of two larger animals. We can find a parallel in Harris's Sea Island tale "Mr. Terrapin and Mr. Bear." Likewise, an Igbo tale of Nnabe, the tortoise, making a riding horse out of an alligator and insulting him midstream finds a parallel in Parsons's Ber Rabbit making a riding horse out of Ber Alligator on the Sea Islands. This same tale has a parallel in the Caribbean, with Ananse, the spider, riding the tiger's back.[33] In another Igbo tale "Nnabe and the Fruits" (given here with its Sea Island companion tale), Nnabe is able to defraud a whole host of animals; there are similarities in the way Ber Rabbit outwits Ber Wolf in "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter."

The spider, tortoise, and hare are shown to be inferior to and answerable only to a higher immortal being, Chineke in Igbo and the Lord in Sea Island tales. Here, for example, Nnabe and Ber Rabbit seek more knowledge from their creator in "Nnabe and Chineke" and "Ber Rabbit and the Lord." While both animals are revered for their wit and ingenuity, both are kicked out of heaven when they attempt to cheat God. Both continue to bear the scars of God's wrath: Nnabe has a broken shell as a result of his fall, and Ber Rabbit has a white tail as a reminder that God threw a cup of milk at him as he was ejected.

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538 171 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering, false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix 1 for a transcription of one story into

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A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

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538 128 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however, no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 171 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

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538 171 2. "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter" is Animal Type 15, The Theft of Butter by Playing Godfather, and Deception Motif K401.1, Dupe's Food Eaten and Then Blame Fastened on Him. Some previous commentators have made references to a fire-jumping scene in other versions of this Sea Island tale.[34] The African parallel for this tale, "Nnabe and the Fruits" does involve a jumping scene, where Nnabe is expected to jump to his death (Motif K891). However, being the sly, perceptive little animal that he is, Nnabe has made prior arrangements for his getaway once he completes his jump.

539 Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter

James Oree
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Ber Wolf de tell Ber Rabbit, "Let's make some butter, okay?"

So Ber Rabbit and Ber Wolf, they got together. They decided to make some butter. Now, they both was married. And between the rabbit and the wolf, the rabbit thought he had a little more sense than the wolf. Okay?

Um hum! Yeah!

So what happen, the rabbit and the wolf, they decided de make the butter.

By and by Ber Rabbit tell the wolf that his wife was expecting a baby. And that he had de go check on the baby! Every now and then he had de go and check on the baby!

So they work in the field. They went in the field and they start de work. They was hoeing, de working they crop. They planted it together—you know, do everything together. They planted they crop. And rabbit said to the wolf, "Ber Wolf? Look a here, Ber Wolf!" Say, "My wife de call me! Say, I—Shah [a typical Sea Island exclamation]! I have for go check on my wife now. Shah!—My wife de expecting a baby, and—"

[Ber Wolf] say, "Okay! Okay, Ber Rabbit, go head."

When he come back, [Ber Wolf] say, "Did your wife had the baby?"

[Ber Rabbit] say, "Yeah!"

[Ber Wolf] say, "What the baby is?"

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The lion started first and jumped across. Each of the other animals jumped across until at last it was Nnabe the tortoise's time to jump. He sang the song and jumped, but fell into the pit. In the pit he denied that he had eaten the fruit. He said that he fell into the pit because he was overdressed and too heavy to jump. Reluctantly, the other animals agreed that maybe his shell was too heavy and that he should be given another chance to clear himself. So they pulled him out from the pit and let him put off his shell. When he finished, he sang the song again and jumped, but still he fell into the pit. This second time all the other animals were convinced that he was the culprit. For his punishment, he was buried alive in the pit and covered with dirt. However, the tortoise was indeed wise, for he had already had the rabbit dig a path from the pit to his house. So the tortoise went home quietly, laughing to himself and praising himself for outwitting the other animals.

Then the *eke* market day arrived, when the rabbit was to collect his money from the tortoise. So the rabbit went to the tortoise's house and told him that he came to collect his fee. The tortoise did not know what to do, since he did not have the money. So he set another day for the rabbit, explaining that his mother-in-law had died and that he had spent all his money for her funeral. On the newly agreed date, the rabbit went again to collect his fee, and this time the tortoise had conceived of a plan to kill the rabbit. He boiled a big pot filled with water and waited for the rabbit to come. When the rabbit came, the tortoise tried to grab him by his tail, but the rabbit was too fast, and pulled himself loose except for the outer cover of his tail, which was pulled off in Nnabe's hands. To this day that is why the rabbit's tail is whiter than the rest of his body.

Chakpii!! *Haa!*

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3. "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is classified as Type 720, My Mother Slew Me; My Father Ate Me; and Motif E631.1, Speaking Bones of Murdered Person Reveal Murder. This tale was not as commonly told on the Sea Islands as it was among the Igbo of Nigeria. Many, many variations wherein crimes were revealed by the murdered person's bones were collected in Nigeria.

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[861] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

825 538 35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

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825 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a
538 high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which
[805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the
[554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages
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on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

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3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

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4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

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10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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000 19. 1 Cor. 15:53–54.

782 20. "Ain't gonna study war no more" is a reference from an old Negro spiritual. The concept itself comes from several references to war in the Bible, such as Ps. 46:9, Isa. 2:4, and Mic. 4:3.

000 21. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16–27.

22. Job 3:17.

128 23. I am again indebted to Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton, who assisted in transcribing this sermon from a recording made during the church service.

538 24. For further discussion of the call-and-response technique see Grace Sims Holt, "Stylin' outta the Black Pulpit," in *Rappin' and Stylin' Out*, ed. Thomas Kochman
113 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 189–204.

538 25. The Gullah and African tales given in this chapter are classified according to the scheme set out by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale*
128 (Helsinki: *Suomalainen Tiedeakatenia*, 1961). Motifs and the names and numbers as-
113 signed to tale types are from Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58).

In the search for systematic methods of presenting such paralinguistic features as voice quality and nonverbal expressive phenomena, Ray L. Birdwhistell proposed a system of notation for describing certain sound phenomena, for example, an arrow pointing upward or downward to indicate various pitch ranges. He likewise developed an elaborate notational system for analyzing body motions and gestures, a system that distinguished hip, leg, ankle, shoulder, wrist, arm, and other movements (see Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*). Some of these notations are quite complex, and they are not yet widely used. Here, because the language of the narratives is complex in itself for most English-speaking readers, I decided to eliminate reading handicaps by minimizing foreign symbols that would tend to interrupt the natural flow of the tales.

538 26. For example, Richard Dorson has a variant of this tale in *American Negro Folktales*, p. 114.

000 27. This observation was brought to my attention by Charles Joyner, who is a native of the South Carolina coastal area.

113 28. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands;* Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* Florence M. Cronise and Henry Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider and the Other Beef* (Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969); and Dorson, *African Folklore*.

000 29. The precautionary measures taken here do not assure that the Igbo tales collected were not influenced by other cultures. No culture can be totally without outside influence; I tried only to decrease the likelihood of obtaining tales with non-African origins. Accordingly, I collected the tales from children and adults only in their native tongue. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, those in remote areas have little reason to use it. I also did not ask to hear any particular type of tale, nor put any restrictions on the length or number of tales told by any one person. I asked simply to hear some of their stories.

30. I am indebted to the renowned Igbo writer Obi Egbuna for his observations concerning African folktales and their implications in Igbo society. Any misrepresentations that might remain are, of course, my own.

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Mrs. Janie Hunter

STORIES

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(524)
(538)

When we was small, we didn't 'low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

BARNEY McCABE

•538 We learn some these stories from my uncle, Harry Williams. He was kind of rough, but he really could tell some stories.

539 Once upon a time it was a twin sister and brother. The sister name was Mary and the brother name was Jack. One day they decided to go on a long traveling. But Jack was a wise child and he told Mary to go in the house and ask Mother could we go. Her mother say, "Yes, you could go, but take care." So Jack say, "Wait a minute, Sister," and went to the barn and get four grain of corn. And Mary said to Jack, "What you gonna do with that corn?" Jack said, "In a long while, you will see." So he put the corn in his pocket.

Then before he leave home Jack told his mother, say, "Mama, I got three dogs—Barney McCabe, Doodle-le-doo and Soo-Boy. I going to leave a glass of milk on the table. If you see that glass of milk turn to blood, I want you to turn my dogs loose."

So they went on traveling and all the time wondering what was the end going be. Pretty soon it come dark and they begin to get weary. They knocked at an old lady house. The old lady run to the door, say, "Who is it?"

Jack say, "Me, Mama. Could we spend the night here? 'Cause we far from home and we very tired." Old lady say, "Oh yes, come on in."

All that time she was a witch-craft and the children didn't know it. She fed them and put them to bed. She had a knife she call "Tommy Hawk." After she put the children to bed she began to sharpen it up:

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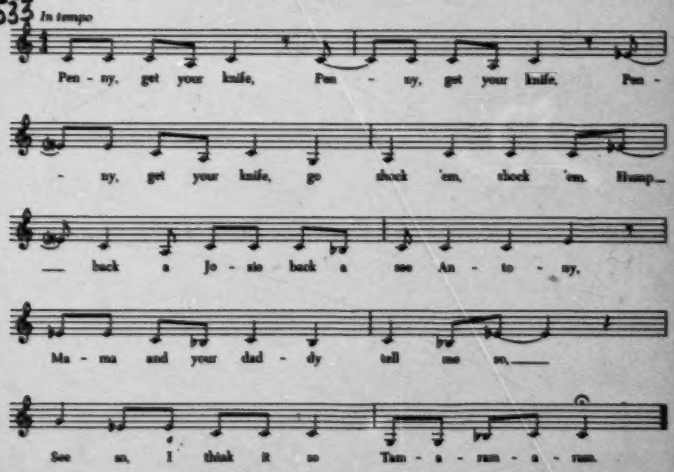

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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Mrs. Mary Pinckney

I TOO SCARED THEN

775 People say if you look over your left shoulder you'll see ghosts. Tell about hag and all kind of thing like that. I look back over my left shoulder all the time, I don't see no ghost. I never see none, but I believe in ghost. Some call 'em ghost, some call 'em spooks, boodyman. That's the way we is call 'em when we was little—boodyman.

538 That old man, Michael Brown, he's always be to our house. I guess he's 'round about seventy-five. He is come over every Sunday and he sit down
775 and talk about all these old-time thing. Talk about old-time ghost. He say when he go home nighttime he have to carry a stick and feel his way, 'specially if it dark, 'cause ghost is crowded in the path. He take stick go "whicha-whoocha-whoocha," clear his way. I be glad when he go home 'cause he talk about those thing and make me scared. Mama like to listen. Not me. I say, "Take your hat and go home." I too scared then. Ghost!

Mr. James Mackey

775 THEY'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FOOT

Some people died, their spirit walk around. If a person died happy, they don't bother you. But people died bad, well, they'll knock you off your foot.

775 One most knock me off my foot one night. I was coming out just about
781 dusk-dark and something come around me like a long black snake—tie around me. It shoot up and I ain't feel like I was onto the ground at all. Only way I came back in this world, a dog smell my scent and that dog bark. Didn't for that, I'd been *gone*.

When my foot touch ground, feel like I been off the ground. I go and curse 'em. They say if I pray I might of get off much better. The more I curse, the more I guess he try to knock me.

When the feeling get back to me, then I start to walk—taking my time just like when a person sick—and I could imagine he up behind me. My hair on my head just tauten up. I got back home, gone to bed that night with *all* my clothes on.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Mrs. Janie Hunter

WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 869 869 186 178 869 869

When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would [538] teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 533 [534]

The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
•538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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di lɐɪ
THE LIE

•538 1. hendɐsɪn ɐd sɔm bɪgdɔg / hɐd sɔm bɪg dɔgdɛ / ... di tʃɪlɪn
Henderson had some big-dog, had some big dog-there.
The children

2. dɐ ɸid dɐ dɔg / ɛn mi ɛn dɐ rɔgmiɛn dɐ dɔg dɐ ɹiɛs ɸɐ gɪt dɐ hɛm mit
(PrC) feed the dog, and me and the rog-me-and-the dog (PrC) race for get-the-ham meat,

3. ɸɐit / jɔsi / jusi / ɛn ɐɪ kɔɾn dɪ dɔg kɔɾn bit mɪ /
ɸɐ gɪtɐ sɔm it
for-eat, you-see, you-see. And I couldn't, the dog couldn't beat me for get-the-some eat.

Henderson owned some very big dogs, some huge dogs. Well when the children came to feed the dogs, the dogs and I would race to get the ham meat to eat. You see, I had to outrun the dogs in order to get something to eat.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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•538

di siniek[30]
THE SNAKE

1. βɛl / ɒɪ ɛ̃ nuo dɪ bɪgɪs wʊn ɒɪ eβə sɔ nɔ̃ / bʔɒɪ nuo / wɛndie /
Well I ain't know the biggest one I ever saw now. But-I know one-day

2. ɒɪ bɪnə pompʰ sm βɒrə otdɪ / ɛn mə lɪrl gɜɛgɜɛn bɪn
I (PAC) pump some water out-there. And my little great-grand (T)

3. iə βɪdmi / ɛn wʊn bɪn jiə bɔt dɛt lɔŋ / kɔm ɜɑ̃ɪ tɜ̣u dɛʰ do dɛʰ...
here with-me. And one (T) here bout that long. Come right through that door there...

4. ɜɑ̃ɪ tɜ̣u dɛʰ / ɛn βɛn dɪtʃɑ̃ɪl ʰɒlə fə mɪ sie gɜɛnmɔmɔ /
right through there. And when the-child holler for me say 'Grandmama'[31]

5. ɒɪ sie jieʰ / sie kɔmieh / so ɒɪ kɔm / i sie ə bɪk siniek
I say 'yeah' say 'come-here.' So I come. (3ɑ́ n) say a big snake

6. bi njo hɔs / ɒɪ sie stɑ̃p jə lɒĩ / jieə gɜɛmɔmɔ /
be in your house. I say 'stop your lie'; 'Yeah Grandmama.'

7. ɒɪ sie βɛi bi / i gɔn ɜɑ̃ɪ inɛn tɜ̣u iə iniɸ wɔn ɛm bɪk tʃieɜ ju gɒʔn
I say 'Where (3ɑ́ n) bo?' (3ɑ́ n) gone right in-and through here. (3ɑ́ n)-neath one them big chair you got-in

8. di kɔnə / ɛn ɒɪ dɪʔn βiliɸ dɪ tʃɑ̃ɪl / ɒɪ sie stɑ̃p lɜɪ / di tʃɑ̃ɪl
the cornor. And I didn't believe the child. I say, 'Stop lie.' The child

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•538 9. bəs out kɑɔɪ / ɛn ərə i bəs ɔt kɑɔɪ / dɛn ɒɪ si ɪm nə lɒɪ dɛ nɔ /
burst out cry, and after (3ɗ n) burst out cry, then I see (3ɗ n) na lie then now.[22]

10. gɑɛn məmə ʔɒɪ ɛ̃ nə lɔɪ / ɒɪ sie ju ɛ̃nə lɒ̃ɪ nuo /
'Grandmama I ain't na lie.' I say, 'You ain't na lie?' 'No.'

11. ɒɪ sie kɔmɔn / so i ɸɒlə mi i kiɛ mi n di ɛntrɑɪβie /
I say 'Come-on.' So (3ɗ n) follow me. (3ɗ n) carry me in the entry-way.

12. ɛn ɒɪ βərn tatʃtʃtʃieɑ nɔ kɑ̃ ɒɪ bi ɸɑɛ djusi / ɒɪ sie βaʔ tʃieə
And I wouldn't touch-the-chair now, cause I be afraid you-see. I say, 'What chair

13. i gɔnɪn / dɪ siem wɔn dɛ ɪn dɪʰ kɔnə gɑɛ̃məmə / ɒɪ ɛ̃ nə tiel
(3ɗ n) gone-in?' 'The same one there in the corner Grandmama. I ain't na tell

14. ju no stoɑɪ / ɛn ɒɪ ʰɒlɔ ɸo kɑ̃ltɛ̃ bɔnɪ / ɛn ɒɪ sie /
you no story.' And I holler for Carl-T-and Bonny, and I say,

15. kɔ miə / dɪtʃɪlrən sie βə ju βɑ̃ / ɒɪ sie kɔmɪə bɔɪ
'Come here.' The-children say, 'What you want?' I say 'Come here boy!'

16. unə də kɔm tʊ mi / ɒɪ sie dɪs lɪrl tʃɑ̃ɪl də tiel mi sɔə bɪk
'Una de come to me!'[23] *I say, 'This little child (PrC) tell me saw a big*

17. siniek gɔn / n dɪ ntɑiβie / ɒɪ sie / tʃɪlən du ɔ̃n əm ɸo mi /
ɒɪ sie kaʃ ɒɪ kɛ̃ sinɛ̃ / ɛn kɑ̃l tɛk dio
snake gone in the entryway.' I say, 'Children, do hunt (3ɸ o) for me.' I say, 'cause I can't see in there.' And Carl take the a

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•538 18. käl sie gogɪʔ di ho / ɔɪ gɔn gɪʔ dɪ ho ɸə käl / ɛn käl ʔʊk
Carl say, 'Go get the hoe.' I gone get the hoe for Carl. And Carl hook

19. dɪ ho ʔɪn də tʃiə / käl sie mɪz mɔsi ɔɪ gän bɪɔk jə tʃieə /
the hoe in the chair. Carl say, 'Mis Mossi I gone broke your chair.'

20. ɔɪ sie dö skus mɪ ɸo dɪ woəd / ɔɪ sie dɪä ju bɪɔgəm /
I say, 'Do excuse me for the word.' I say drat you broke (3ɸ o).

21. ɛn i pəl dɪ tʃiə tʊ əm / ɛn ßen i pʊld ɪ tʃiə tʊəməm
di bɪk ɔl siniek
And (3ɸ n) pull the chair to (3ɸ o) and when (3ɸ n) pull the chair to (3ɸ o)-(3ɸ o) the big old snake

22. dɔn iɸ dɪ tʃiə lɛkdɛtkʷɔlɔp / wɔz bɪk ɪs mɔ əm /
kɛl sie o ʒizəs /
down neath the chair, like-that-coil-up was big as my arm. Carl say, 'O Jesus!'

23. ɑɪ nuo ju gɔn silip nɪs hɔs di näɪt iɸ ɔɪ ɔɪ ßi dɪrn kəmɪə /
'I know you gone sleep in this house the night if I, I, we didn't come-here.'

24. ɛn i tɛk dɪ ho ɛn lɪkəm kɪɔs əm lɛk dɛt / i stɛtʃ ʊutʰ
And (3ɸ n) take the hoe and lick (3ɸ o), cross (3ɸ o) like that. (3ɸ n) stretch out

25. nkälɪkəmgɪn / i dui tiel ɛk dɛt / ɛn bönɪ kəm
and-Carl-like-(3ɸ o)-again. (3ɸ n) do-(3ɸ p) tail like that and Bonny come

26. ziet dɔn ɔ i niek / ...
right down on (3ɸ p) neck...

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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di stɔ̃m
THE STORM

538 1. da wɔzə βə ju kɔl ə 'sä:klɔn / die ɸɜs kɔlɔm ɔrɔm stɔm /
That was what you call a cyclone. They first call-(3ɸ c) autumn storm,

2. bəri də wɔzə sä:klɔn / die hɛd sieβɪl sɛns dɛt / bɔ? dɛn 'i
But-(3ɸ n) that was-a cyclone. They had several since that, but then (3ɸ n)

3. wɔzn lɛk dɛt / oɔɪ mɛmbə dɛt / ...ɔɪ bɪnəɔ̃ŋ ɪlɛ̃mɛəz
wasn't like that. Oh-I remember that... I been-around eleven-years

4. ol / di nɔɪndɪ tɹi stɔ̃m / də stä sə sɔndɪ mɔnɪn / ɛnədə giɛl ɔɪ ɔɪ ɔɪ
old. The ninety-three storm, (PrC) start on-a Sunday morning. And-ah-well gal, I, I, I

5. kə tɛɪl / jə bout dɛt dʒɪs lɛkə gud ɪs jɛstɪdie / di βetə luk ñiezɪ
could tell you about that just like a good as yesterday. The weather look hazy,

6. dʒɪs lɛk ə lɪɹl hiezɪ ni ɪz nɔ̃ / ɛn so mɔɪ mi mə mɔrə / hi βə ɪn
just like a little hazy than-(3ɸ n) is now. And so my-me my mother, (3? n) was in

7. klɜtʃ... / dɪ ol mɛn tʃɔtʃ bɪn dɔ̃ ɛ̃ɪs bɛpitɪs tʃɔtʃ dɔ̃ ɔ̃ ɔ̃ɔ·dɛʰ... ɔɪ wɔz də bɪgɪs
church... The old man church (T) down here-this Baptist church down on road there... I was the biggest

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538 8. bɔɪ dɪ tʃɪɹɪn / sieβəl ə βi bɪn dɛʰ / ɛn dɪn məɪə wɔn ə mi ɔŋgəl
boy the children. Several of we (T) there.
And then my a one of me uncle

9. ɸɔm oβə hɒ·t / βi bɪn lɪβɪn obə jä / ...βɛ dɛm dieβiʃ
from over Hart, we (T) living over here...where them Davis

10. bɔi də βie ɔp ndə kɔnə / mə ɔŋgəl älivə n bɪndʒi hɒt
boy (L) way up in the corner. My uncle Oliver and Benjy Hart

11. o·rɪsɔn lɔnzä / die kɔm oβə dɛ ʂɔndə / ɛɸəɹə dɪ ol pipl βəɪntʃətʃ
oldest-son Lonza, they come over there Sunday. After the
old people were-in-church

12. ɸə spɛn di die βɪɸ mɪ / βel mɛ 'mä lɛɸ mi ɸə kuk / dɪnə /
to spend the day with me. Well my ma left me to cook dinner.

13. βɛ 'βɛɹɛs ɒɪtɛɪl di piplɒ̃ / sɔmɒ̃ sɔ̃mɛ sie mɛmɒɪ βäɪɸ ẽ də ñöm /
sie äil stɒβ äil stɒβ /
Where, whereas, I tell the people: Some, some-man say,
'man-my wife ain't (L) home.' Say, 'I'll starve, I'll starve'

14. sie äil stɒβ / sie ẽ nörɪn hïə fə kuk / bə' gjɛl oə oə
Say, 'I'll starve.' Say, 'ain't nothing here to cook.'
But gal, oh, oh,

15. so ɒɪ kuk 'dɪnə / ɒɪ dɪɾn βie tiel die kɔm ɸɔm 'tʃɔtʃ / sied
So I cook dinner. I didn't wait til they come from church. Said

16. ɒɪ tʰɔk ɔp nɒɪ ɸid mi ɔŋkl ɛn mɒɪ nɛɸu ɛn mɪʃieɸ /
I took up and-I feed me uncle, and my nephew and me-self,

17. ɛn də lieɾə də gɪɾn gjɛl lɔ̃k βɛɹ de də 'βɛɾə də
and the later (PrC) getting, gal, look where the weather (PrC)

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•538 18. 'kloznɪn / dɛk dɛ lɒɪ / dɛn də stä· ə lɪl dɜɪdɪlɪn 'ɜien /
closing-in. Dark the light,[26] *then (E) start a little drizzling rain.*

19. dʒɪs ɛɸə jɛrə gɪt ho·m / a·aβə ɒɪ kɔl mɛ mä jiɛrə / i niem
Just after Yatta[27] *got home, that-what I call me ma, Yatta, (3ᵊ n) name*

20. lɒɪzə bɔʔ dən / ñeʔ ju nuo / bʰɒɪ ɜiez ɔp βɪ di ol pipl
Liza. But then, ha! you know, but I raise up with the old people

21. dɛn / 'βen die märə βə kɔ / so n so / ɒɪ kɛ̃ bɜɪŋ də βə ɜɐɪt nɔ /
then when their mother was call so-and-so. I I can't bring the word right now[28]

22. ɒɪ ɒɪ kɔl əm jiɛrə / βel / hi gɪt hom lɪrl ɸo dɪʰ
I, I call (3ᵊ o) Yatta. Well, (3ᵊ n) got home little before the

23. ol mɒn / kɔm ɪn i sipɜeŋkl ɜien i βə / din bɪ lɔŋ dɪ
old man. Come in (3ᵊ n) sprinkle rain (3ᵊ n) wau. Then bit longer

24. o mɒn kɔm on di hɔɪs ɒɪ ziəm kɔmɪn / di ämbɜɛlə oβəʰ
the old man come on the horse. I see (3ᵈ o) coming, the umbrella over (3ᵈ o)

25. ɛn bɔɪ gjɛl / βen də i·βənɪn / ɛn də sɔn gɪtn 'loən loə /
And boy, gal, when (E) evening, and the sun getting lower-and lower

26. də hieβiə ɛn hieβiə də wɔz gɪtn /
the heavier and heavier (E) was getting.

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That was what you call a cyclone. It was first called an autumn storm. But that was a cyclone. There has been several since that one, but none quite like that one. But I remember it well... I was about eleven years old then. It was the storm of (18)93, and it started on a Sunday morning. Still, Miss, I could tell you about it as well as if it happened just yesterday.

The weather looked hazy, just a little hazier than it looks right now. My mother, she was in church. My father was a member of the Baptist church down the road... I was the eldest boy of several children. We, in addition to one of my uncles from Hart, were living near where those Davis boys live now far in the corner section. My uncle Oliver, and Benjy Hart's eldest son, Lonza, came over Sunday after the old people ... to pass the day with me. Well, my mother left me home to cook dinner. Whereas, I told the visitors, I said: 'Some men say, "Man, my wife is not home." They often say, "I'll starve, because there isn't anything here to cook."' But, young lady, I cooked dinner for them. I didn't wait until they came from church. So I took charge; I prepared a feast for my uncle, my nephew and myself. And the later it became, Miss, the weather began to close in. The sun was shrouded with clouds and it began to drizzle rain.

Just after Yatta came home—I called my mother Yatta. Her name was Liza, but you know, I was reared by the old people then when one's mother was called such-and-such. I won't speak of it now. I called her Yatta. Well, she came home a little before the old man. She came in dripping from the rain. Then, a while later, my father appeared on the horse. I could see him coming with the umbrella over him. And young lady, as the evening wore on, the sun hung lower, heavier and heavier in the sky. (Narrative continues at length.)

000 himself understood.

539 •[538] 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naïf and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

538 1. *snake* [sinick] ∅ → V / C __ C
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] r → ∅ / C __
[pogɔm] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, [197] Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /nɔ/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /im dɔ lɔi/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /im nɔ lɔi/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /una/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

•538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Lisa* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes that most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

•538 551 Even among the younger generation, most children on the island are known by two names.

538 28. The phrase *I can't bring the word*, or *I can't bring that* means 'I can't remember at the moment', or, depending on the context, 'I will not speak of it at this time.'

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[10]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[11]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[12]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
(197) dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
171 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
178 her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.
(171) (178)

[10]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yearly way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.
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Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction," a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced." Within the last few years in South Caro-

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"See Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 82-94.

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"Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya: or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

Slave Songs of the United States. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 41 fables, 8 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 48 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

With Camp Along the Black Border, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

The Captain, Stories of the Black Border, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 3 illustrations.

Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 3 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

Dollose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 198 pp., 25 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 5 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

Saint Helena Island Spirituals, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Frestown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 98 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are war-time pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 569 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-205 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 254 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amends*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shephard, 1893. 256 pp.

Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumbling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 168, 175, 184, 190, 196, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1925. 133 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*. Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1521; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1928, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C.[113] This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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[113] "*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, *Review of The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: 'E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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less inured to disappointment. As soon as the book was out—I had to give the proofs seventeen readings—I started to edit and bring out *In Darkest Cuba*. . . . . Realizing last January that my time was short, I promised myself that if I lived, I would publish three books this year and, thank the Lord, I've managed to do it.

"Of the thousand pages, more than nine hundred have been written since August of last year—written slowly and painfully, with a pencil on Sundays and at nights, while tired and worn out by my nine or ten hours at The State—duties I never miss.

"Now I'm through with dinkey for a while. Each of these four *Black Border* books has its place, and I think they will live because of their sincerity and simplicity—but time will show."

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192 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for
•538 an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

Words

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.[a] The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam, oona, swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du, goober, pinder, cooter, okra, geechy, cymbi, bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer, penepne, da, da-da. Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.[b] Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.[c] Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye. Stepney* is

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[a]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.

Bennett, I, 338.

George Philip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *roodoo, hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[191] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

[b]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] [c]Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time, three-time,* etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chuesday, two T'ursday, two place,* the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

Proverbs

•538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Little axe cut down big tree.*

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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[554] *Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh my own."

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CONCLUSION

178 Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.""

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

"Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'tons' ' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

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181 829 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring up trouble for yourself. In Macterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 567 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to advance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[2] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch [535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the 181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*, 177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of 567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[2] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the
567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa." [36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the Wanderer, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between
• 538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations
171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] *J. A. Tillinghast*, in The Negro in Africa and America, says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."

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195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms. [533]

• 538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A. [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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538 121 (522) wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

538 (115)

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

(191) In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!
But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:
What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da *fulafafa!*" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say *wulisāpāpa*." The joke lies in the fact that "*fulafafa*" and "*wulisāpāpa*" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

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III

FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like. 538•

In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina,* Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it. 114
538

Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
• 538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina."
This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent
book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient
538 here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175 567

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000 them.

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An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with

> Once upon a time, a very good time,
> Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

> Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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The charm of the stories told by the Negroes lies as much in the way they are told as in the stories themselves. As Mrs. Parsons has said, "The characteristic emphasis of Negro tales, the drawl, and the tricks of speeding up, are difficult to indicate on paper. Italics and exclamation points are but feeble indicators; and how can one express by printers' signs the significance of what is not said?—a significance conveyed by manner or by quietness of intonation, of which a good story-teller is past master." Stripped of the tricks of the story-teller and of the dialect in which they are told, and written down in good English, these tales make slow reading.

To the student of folklore, this vast body of stories is something to be collected, preserved, studied, compared, analyzed, something which it would be a shame to let die out. But to the Negroes these stories are like any other stories. They lie tucked away in memory most of the time. Occasionally they are called forth to do their bit toward entertaining the teller and his listeners. New stories, perhaps cheap stories, are constantly crowding in upon them, and if some of the old-time ones which go back almost to Adam slip out of memory through disuse, no tears are shed. Finding a rare tale may thrill the collector, but the islanders may think something else is far more valuable. To them a story of a stuttering slave's being beaten up by a stuttering Irish patrol because the Irishman thought the Negro was mocking him may be much more attractive than Buh Rabbit's victory over Buh Lion.

The folklorist may complain that the art of story-telling is dying, but he must admit that the old stories

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•538 are safe for some time yet among the Negroes of the Sea Islands. The older people rarely tell the stories to white people, it is true, but the children tell them naïvely and with plenty of skill. On the way to school, at recess time, at parties, at home around the fireside, or at work, the young folk tell stories and riddles. They may deviate from the traditional version of a tale, but they are good at supplying new incidents and at combining several stories to make a new one. If part of a story is supposed to be sung, they sing it rather than recite it as many adults would do. If Buh Rabbit is supposed to make a funny noise as he runs down the road, this is supplied with an ingenuity which attempts to outdo the other fellow.

In the following tales the language is, as a rule, that of a person who speaks a somewhat modified sea-island dialect. It happens that none of the stories given here was told me by the old-time mushy-mouthed type of speaker. This is fortunate for the average reader, for the pure dialect is quite difficult to read. Since different speakers have different peculiarities, the reader must not be surprised at the apparent lack of consistency in dialect.

I

539 DOG AND DOG HEAD[1]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Frog all-two go fo' hunt deah. Dey need some dog, an' a dog cost twelve biscuit. Buh

[1] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. This is one of the most popular stories in the Sea Islands. For other variants, see Parsons' *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, pp. 1-5. The following is the most common variant: Rabbit sees Frog's "t'roat gwine up an' down," and thinks Frog is eating his biscuits, so Rabbit decides to eat some of his. Frog arrives with all of his biscuits, but Rabbit has only a few left and has to be content with a dog head. Sometimes, Frog uses the mock plea and tricks Rabbit into admitting that his dog head did not catch the deer.

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XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

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There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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XIX

FAMILY AFFECTION[16]

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Once upon a time there was an old lady and a old man and they were man and wife. The old man was at dinner and his wife and children were on the outside. It was a windy day and the wind blew the house down. The children cried out, "The house fell on popper." The old lady called, "I hope it ain't broke my pipe." The children said, "Wait till I done eat, then you will hear me cry." The end of the story.

XX

OPENING VERSES[16]

1.

Once upon a time, a wery good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco on de railroad line.[17]

2.

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de man drink wine.[18]

3.

Beef in de market ten cents a poun',
You never git a poun' till you lay yo' money down.

[16] Written by Lawrence Mingin, Lee-Rosenwald School.

[16] After hearing one of these at the beginning of a story, I began to ask each narrator if he knew any opening verses. Thereafter I found them to be quite frequent, although they tend to drop out of use as unnecessary embellishments unless something reminds the narrator of them. [538]

[17] Sometimes "on de street cyaar line," sometimes "an' spit white lime."

[18] Sometimes "cat drink wine." Other variations are made by interchanging the names and varying the combinations of the two lines.

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524 38. Somethin' open like a barn door an' shut like a trap. You guess every riddle but you never will guess this. *Ans.* An umbrella.

39. What is las' t'ing you take off 'fo' you go to bed? *Ans.* Take foot off o' flo'.

40. Black within, red without,
Four corners round about.

Ans. Chimney.

41. Scrooked as an arrow, busy as a bee. *Ans.* Creek.

42. As I was goin' 'cross a fiel' o' wheat
I pick up some'tin' good to eat.
It was neither fish, flesh, nor bone,
But I kept it till it walked alone.

Ans. Egg.

43. What goes up white an' comes down yellow? *Ans.* Egg.

44. Constantinople is a hard word to spell. Can you spell it in two letters? *Ans.* I-t, it.

45. Crooked as a rainbow, t'iefin' (thieving) as a cat. *Ans.* Snake.

46. Once I was going to London Bridge, I met a man and a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and I couldn't tell the ladies from the gentlemen. *Ans.* Ants.

47. Who always sit with his hat on before the queen. *Ans.* The coachman.

PROVERBS

• 538 1. Take cyare mo' bettah nor be sorry.
2. 'Mos' kill bird don' make soup.
3. Singin' in the mornin', hawk catch you befo' night.
4. Young folks listen what old folks say when danger keep out of the way.
5. Everything good to hear is not good to talk.
6. Ev'ry grin-teet' don' mean laugh.
7. Ev'ry shut-eye don' mean sleep.
8. A good run is better than a bad stand.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538

10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de ccb.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

Toasts[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.